

## STANDARDS COMPLAINT DECISION NOTICE

<b>Complaint ref</b>	23876
<b>Subject Member</b>	Cllr Anthony Priddle
<b>Council</b>	Callow and Haywood Parish Council.
<b>Date of decision</b>	20 June 2022
<b>Breach of the code (Y/N)</b>	Yes

### DECISION

On 20 June 2022, the monitoring officer considered a complaint alleging that Councillor Priddle may have acted in breach of the Callow and Haywood Parish Council's code of conduct for members. The appointed independent persons were consulted in considering the matter.

The monitoring officer has concluded that Councillor Priddle did breach the Parish Council's code of conduct.

#### Summary of complaint

This complaint is based on the Callow and Haywood Parish Council's consideration of a planning application for development that is on land neighbouring the subject member's land.

The complainant suggests that the subject member is in breach of the Callow and Haywood Code of Conduct and specifically the following general principles set out in Part IV of the Code of Conduct:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

As an overall point the complainant believes that the subject member has sought to influence fellow Parish Councillors in the making of a recommendation to the local planning authority in relation to a planning application submitted by the complainant and has repeatedly sought to challenge the process followed in the making of the recommendation on the planning application.

Prior to the Parish Council meeting of 12 January 2022 at which the planning application was considered it is suggested that the subject member had stated that they would fight the planning application in question 'all the way'. Although there is no evidence provided to support this part of the complaint.

In relation to the rest of the complaint the complainant has provided an extensive timeline informed by freedom of information requests and subject access requests made by the complainant.

Of particular relevance is an email that is purportedly sent to all parish councillor with the exception of one in relation to the subject planning application. The email was addressed to "Fellow Parish Councillors" and the wording of the email suggests that this was sent in the subject member's role as a parish councillor and not as an individual. This email was sent using

“BCC” and therefore it would not be clear to recipients who has, or has not, received the email. The exclusion of the one councillor is was deliberate as the subject member sent a copy of the email the Parish Council Clerk confirming that it had been sent to all Parish Councillors with the exception of one specified parish councillor, who is the complainant’s husband. This is considered to be contrary to the principles of Integrity, Openness and Honesty as the tone and use of “BCC” could reasonably said to have mislead his fellow Parish Councillors.

The complainant has also provided evidence that the subject member telephoned the Chair of the Parish Council after sending the email in question to confirm that he had read and understood the email. There is no evidence as to the response of the Chair and therefore no breach of the code is considered to arise from this.

Further there has been evidence provided that the subject member visited a newly co-opted Parish Councillor at his home and provided documentation and information that had been provided to Parish Councillors prior to his co-option. The subject member has offered no explanation of the purpose of doing this and therefore it suggested that he was trying to use his position as an existing Parish Councillor to persuade others of his point of view. This could be considered a breach of the principle of Objectivity but this is not certain and therefore this action is not considered to amount to a breach of the code of conduct.

Additional evidence has been provided which shows that when the Chair of Parish Council refused to intervene further in the matter of the contentious planning application the subject member shouted at the Chair, although it is acknowledged that the subject member then apologised. This behaviour is considered to be contrary to the principles of Selflessness and Integrity.

#### Decision

Cllr Priddle does appears to have used his position as a parish councillor in attempt to further his personal interested and has breached the general code of conduct principles of Selflessness; Integrity; Openness and Honesty

I recommend that a written apology is made to the complainant.